

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence School Committee

East Providence City Hall - Council Chamber

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

September 12, 2016

Open Session

Mr. Tsonos, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Members Present: Nathan Cahoon, Anthony Ferreira, Joel Monteiro, Charles Tsonos; (Jessica Beauchaine not present at open call; arrived later). Also Present: Kathryn M. Crowley, Superintendent; Dr. Sandra Forand, Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Celeste Bowler, Assistant Superintendent; Robert M. Silva, Esq. and Andrew Thomas, Esq.

A motion was made by Mr. Cahoon that the Committee convene in Executive Session for purposes of discussing: Personnel – R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a) (1); Collective Bargaining RI Gen Laws 42-46-5 (a) (2); Litigation/Pending Litigation RI Gen. Laws 42-46-5 (a) (2), seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

The School Committee returned to Public Session; motion by Mr.

Cahoon to return to open session and to seal the minutes of the executive session, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Report Executive Session Votes – Mr. Cahoon reported that one vote was taken in executive session regarding personnel item to approve the suspension of a non-certified employee; Vote was 5-0 to approve.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence were observed.

Motion to Set a Curfew for School Committee Meetings – Motion by Mr. Cahoon to adjourn no later than 10:30PM, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Consent Agenda – Motion was made by Mr. Cahoon to approve items 1-2-3-4 as follows, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

1) Communications

2) Correspondence (RI Educator Code of Professional Responsibility, RI Teachers Standards, Basic Education Plan)

3) Approval of Field Trip – Riverside Middle School

4) Home School Requests

Discussion regarding Requisitions- Bill List:

Summary of Requisitions – Bill Lists

Warrant #

1659	8/30/16	\$	26.04
1660	9/6/16	\$	500.00
1661	9/8/16	\$	104,021.02
1662	9/8/16	\$	1,075,288.57

Discussion: Mr. Monteiro questioned bills for legal services totaling \$4800; he reviewed copies and the hours wrapped up in this billing involved hours for discussion with members on litigation cases; these are things the School Committee would get updated on in executive session; phone conversations on litigation are concerning to him; 18 or so hours on research on the Hennessey roof; he requested an update on where we are on that issue.

Mr. Ferreira said that Mr. Silva mentioned this to him. Mr. Reynolds (the former Facilities Director) was asked to go on the roof with the roofing company to point out the issues and it looked like the work was done according to specs of the contract; however, the specs failed and whoever did the specs failed because the roof is pitched in the wrong direction; Mr. Ferreira told them to bring it to School Committee; four years later this will cost so much money to bring this to court; never going to happen; four years later it is about the architects design; money invested in this; let it lie and take a beating; he would not want legal team to battle it in court because we will lose it in the end.

Mr. Monteiro said he raised the issue tonight because of his concern

with the fact that the School Committee as a whole should have received an update since they received a bill from legal for about 20 hours of work; legal is accruing hours and no decisions being made; a whole lot of nothing for \$4800.

Mr. Tsonos said he asked Mr. Silva to speak about this; Mr. Silva said he does not know what to speak about; they have been billing this format for 20 years; bills explain themselves with calls or emails listed; the issue of Mr. Ferreira is convoluted; legal never involved in the architectural contract; there is a warranty contract of roof manufacturer; he requested and received a huge pile of documents from the Superintendent's office when he was asked to look into the matter and he tried to identify and educate himself about it; he even went to the site with Mr. Feola and Mr. Barilla; he asked if there was some documentation on what the problem is/was; emails sent by them and there was mention of Mr. Farrar, who was Clerk of the Work sat that time. . He has not had a full report and still does not know what the problem was; "we" do not think the roof has failed; in discussions with Mr. Feola, it is not defective, so he does not believe the claim would be against the manufacturer.

Mr. Monteiro – waiting to get information from Mr. Feola; then Mr. Ferreira said it is built to specs and way too cumbersome; at the point of 20 hours billed, it should have come back to School Committee to make a decision to either put more money into it or cut our losses; he is bringing this warrant/bill list issue up now; we do not have enough

information; cut our losses; we are throwing money out window; at 20 hours, we should be at some point to cut it or continue with it.

Mr. Silva said he was not sure what he will get from Mr. Feola; these are issues and emails over years; fact driven, complicated; prognosticated how legal will come out; he is not in a position to notify School Committee if we should pursue it.

Mr. Monteiro – we can continue to put money into this; there are 20 hours billing on it already; it was his suggestion to bring it forward to School Committee. Mr. Silva said that he should have called or emailed him about it.

Mr. Monteiro said the School Committee was always their voice and questions would go through him. The Chair contacted the Superintendent; whatever the Superintendent decided that does not cost money but when it comes to billable services, not to call lawyer; we are billed for conferences with colleagues; with Chair 2 1/2 hours; this is excessive; this is his question but only if body agrees with it?

Mr. Cahoon – School Committee reviews warrants; there is a point where we should make a decision to go further; phone calls would cause more billable hours.

Mr. Tsonos – for the record, no member of School Committee has coordinated with him to call; that has not been the way School

Committee operated the last couple years; we asked Mr. Silva to get a recommendation next meeting and when we directed, Mr. Silva pursued this matter; we needed guidance to pursue or not; if more costly, etc. please give us your recommendation.

Mr. Silva stated that he has an opinion about current players; 5-6 potential defendants – fairly confident warranty still in place but not the source of the problem; from the site visit, roof has not failed; appears to be design of the roof; looking at contractual relationship with design architect; he will give an opinion of retribution and damages from them; he needs to make clear that we need an independent engineer to look at specs to see if a failure; he has not gotten to that point; has emails, pictures from Mr. Barilla; he does not have all the information, but will be in a much better position when he does, to give an opinion; it is time consuming reading documents; he may say at some point that we are spending money foolishly; he is trying to recreate past to give the School Committee a report on what to do.

Mr. Tsonos - we have many meetings without legal; presence not needed; they are asked not to attend

Ms. Beauchaine – email whole School Committee “not to attend” as public record; she is one of those people under billing; she was not told that lawyer was told not to come; there are other names on the bill; she is not the only one; she contacted them and they responded to her; she sees him as the School Committee attorney; Chair should

let her know that legal will not be at a meeting.

Mr. Silva said his client is the School Committee; he communicates with each and every individual member; if School Committee has questions about legality, he responds if called, and has responsibility for the entire School Committee; not easy representing five people at once; has been successful; calls them as a client to pay attention to; he sends emails with Superintendent and Ms. Iannelli; billing in 3-5 months drastically decreased; he does not do anything unless asked; if not involved, he does not bill; if he should not be responding to individual members he should be told that.

Mr. Monteiro disagreed that legal works for five members; he works for body as a whole through the Chair; that is what he represents; if billable and costs go up; should go through the Chair; if position is that each can call at \$150 per hour, School Committee has to choose how they operate; if questions, Chair would give answer to all School Committee.

Ms. Beauchaine – are we asking for questions to go through the Chair; litigation, ethics, executive session; development of property; up to now, Mr. Silva would respond; she asked the Chair to let her know when he is not going to be present at meetings.

Mr. Ferreira asked what brought this up; four years of fighting over \$4 million for the roof which has destroyed the building; mold behind

soffit; this goes back four years; serious problem; if this was addressed four years ago; it would have been a good case.

Mr. Cahoon agreed that we should not go down this route any more.

Mr. Ferreira said we would be wasting money going forward; the way the roof was constructed is causing issues; tried to defer water; this is just an issue he followed; \$1.2 just not right from day one; we should own it and fix it; he asked the roof company to go up on roof with Mr. Reynolds and list why problems; water behind soffit; why split gutters; this went by the wayside; then he asked Mr. Silva to look at it; to repair is wrong from four years ago; we have no leg to stand on with the roof itself.

Mr. Monteiro agreed with action to look into it, but at this point, we should get an update, then decide whether to continue down road or not; this far into research, we should have had an update; the bill keeps getting bigger.

Mr. Silva – needs documents put together by Facilities Director; has never seen them; time consuming and starting from zero.

Kathryn Crowley stated that at this point, we should get an estimate to fix the problems, then compare that with litigation costs to see what we want to do; asked to bring this issue back on agenda for October meeting in order to make a decision.

Mr. Monteiro felt that we should just get it fixed, since it does not make sense to spend thousands of dollars researching this before anything goes down; we also need to take look as a School Committee whether and how to spend money; he does not see any reason why one member should be updated; should be as a School Committee and that should happen when School Committee gets together collectively; School Committee was never polled even outside of a meeting; he is not comfortable with what we are being charged for this.

Ms. Beauchaine – sooner than later

Mr. Ferreira said he may have questions, but he does not think anyone calls legal just to spend taxpayer money.

Ms. Beauchaine disclosed why she called legal.

**Motion by Mr. Cahoon to approve warrants, seconded by Mr. Ferreira.
Vote 5-0.**

Approval of Minutes for School Committee meeting held on 8/8/16, 8/16/16, 8/23/16, 8/28/16, and 8/29/16

Motion to approve by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Kathryn Crowley –provided School Committee members with the RI Educator Code of Professional Responsibility, RI Professional Teaching Standards, and the Basic Education Plan (BEP), which are

all important documents for School Committee to read, know about and endorse each year.

Ms. Beauchaine noted approval of a field trip request for 8th grade students to travel to Washington DC in May 2016; acknowledged teachers in audience.

PTO/PTA Reports

Kelly of Silver Spring PTA noted positive information; signs for Kindergarten students a success; purchased tables for outside; wonderful transition of Mr. Kirkutis as Principal, kids positive; great return back to school; thanks to all for positive support.

Beverly Lefort – thanks to all for helping at Hennessey Playground build; greatly appreciated, we will be having a Phase II project; and a Back to School Luau this Friday at Silver Spring School.

Public Comment I – Agenda Items – Deb Good – involved grandmother – spoke about school start time for tweens and teens; two other districts have changed successfully; CDC – American Pediatric Society, so much literature; pushing the school day forward makes a difference in behavior, health, etc. Not without cost to do it, but proven academic achievement; she provided a packet of resources. One hour makes huge difference for the kids and since we are here for the kids, she asked to take under advisement for

consideration.

Superintendent's Report – Kathryn Crowley

Opening of School –reported a successful opening; positive convocation; well received by staff; three School Committee members in attendance; one school recognized by ASCD Whole Child – Orlo Avenue School and Yanaiza Gallant; impressive award; tied to whole child both social and academic.

Enrollment Numbers – tight in all grade levels; successful enrollment and will report again in October.

High School Facilities Review RFP Opening – five people attended Bid opening including Mr. Feola and we have made a recommendation to the city for SLAM to be awarded the bid; sent an email to chairperson.

Five-Year Technology Financial Plan – Kelly Ahrens, Chief Information Officer presented plan.

focus on transition from computer labs to 1:1; will need to invest in that; computer labs will be refurbished for transition to support curriculum; we have to move to new curriculum; we want to have strong support for Special Education teachers, lap tops, etc. and flexibility for special education teachers; will survey them as to what they need; we do not have information on exactly what to buy; will be

determined by teachers.

See Key Concepts in Report. Discussion took place.

Kathryn Crowley stated that we are moving to 1:1 and getting away from computer labs and we are looking at leasing to save some money.

Mr. Cahoon – are we making assumption that 1:1 is good for all districts.

Kathryn Crowley – districts are moving to Blended Learning, training teachers 1:1 will be the pen/pencil of the future; also professional development to go along with Blended Learning.

Mr. Cahoon said it makes sense; issues over year sounds good but does not pay off; he would like to look at in a year for discussion if we achieve what we set out to achieve.

Mr. Ferreira requested a report in a year; important to know how it is working.

Kathryn Crowley – at end of this school year, we will submit report on goals for this year; goal is to incorporate technology in classrooms; blended learning will use technology to access materials for the curriculum; will use computers; report from teachers, etc. at the end of the year; technology is now like paper and pencils; all have to know and have proficiency on it.

Dr. Bowler added that she lived through 1:1 in last district; spent whole year on what implementation looked like; also had teachers not comfortable; huge piece with professional development; on line

resources; personalize for children; expand opportunities for children; students learned to attend to lessons; how implemented; how repaired; students could get help; implement teaching and learning.

Friends of Townie Athletics Organization Account - Greg Amore, Athletic Director

Approval of All Fundraising Activities by Teams to go Through the Friends of Townie Athletics Organization

Mr. Monteiro thanked the organization; has been back drop of EP supporting sports program; raising funds consistently since 1993. Mr. Amore proposed to take fund funds in Townie Account and transfer \$80,000 to Friends of Townies to manage, handle, oversee accordingly; 1993 organization was formed for fundraising and functioned through the Athletic Director; 70/30 fundraising for teams; general fund Townie Athletics benefited all; was not 5013C. In 2008, core members break away to become Friends with 5013C; account left whole to Athletic Department; problems with funds left behind; oversight was not there; money to general fund and to teams; intent of Townie Athletics is to supplement athletic budget; it was not intended to supply teams with necessities; 2009 Budget Commission – fund used to buy basic items; his proposal is to remove funds from School Department and put into Friends of Townies; every decision on funds goes through a board and that is the safest way to handle these funds; allows booster club; organization runs tight ship; vote of

executive board necessary; only supplemental not for necessities; proposed to remove fund raising money in hands of Townie Athletics to manage and oversee; prudent move to make; should have been made long time ago; Friends of Townies approved; especially with recent history; he has been on Board and well versed on how they operate.

Discussion on fundraising.

Mr. Amore stated that money from all accounts; no teams will be short changed with this transfer; we encourage money from fundraising to be spent on that team; extra money would be used to make those teams whole if discrepancy in accounting going forward under Friends Townie Athletics; organization does a good job keeping records. Superintendent Crowley and the Finance Director support this.

Kathryn Crowley and Finance Director support this

Mr. Tsonos asked if there is a place for High School Band to fit in here.

Kathryn Crowley – now a full time Athletic Director; have had discussions about an extracurricular director.

Motion by Mr. Cahoon to move up Action Item #6, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Motion by Mr. Cahoon to approve that all fundraising go to the Townie Athletic account, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Director of Finance Report – Lucy Maddock – Motion by Mr. Monteiro to approve moving to item under M2, (2016-17 Budget) seconded by Mr. Cahoon. Voe 5-0.

Finance Director, Lucy Maddock, reported on an ambitious and conservative budget; important to have Workers Compensation included in budget

Discussion regarding ordering books; we are requesting \$1 million additional from the city.

Mr. Cahoon asked if we are reflecting in our revenues any money back from RIDE.

Lucy Maddock – all housing aid money goes into capital budget;

Mr. Luba – looked at money from donations on tax bills; \$7064 for uniforms/equipment \$4000 for football team.

School Committee asked Mr. Luba what \$1 million increase would cost taxpayers; reported that the cost to taxpayers roughly about \$1.6 million of additional taxes, but the city does not collect money immediately; a tax increase now will not be effective until next July; number is available but he does not remember what it was

Mr. Monteiro– last year did not calculate; optimistic no tax increase at all.

Mr. Luba – budget will be presented to City Council at workshops in public hearings; City Manager can recommend proposed budget.

Motion by Mr. Cahoon to consider action item on 2016-17 budget,

seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Motion by Mr. Cahoon to approve 2016-2017 school budget as presented with corrections, seconded by Mr. Monteiro to approve proposed budget of \$79,464,804.53 which includes 1.3% increase for all current employees. Ms. Beauchaine noted that this total includes Workers Compensation cost; all voted aye. (Vote 5-0).

Director of Facilities Report

Update on Shovel Ready Projects- Mr. Feola submitted projects to RIDE; the Riverside Middle School fire sprinkler; fire alarm at Whiteknact; windows to courtyard at Martin Middle School; through the Governor's fund; as project goes, bill sent off; they inspect, we get money; we do not have to wait for housing aide; reimbursement goes to capital fund to use. Using Jensen Hughes Company.

Mr. Ferreira requested to see drawings for windows and if gutter system incorporated; he believes that we need to maintain what we have on a professional level; better maintenance; windows only 35 years old;

Kathryn Crowley – will show Mr. Ferreira drawings.

Discussion Items

Elementary Report Cards – Connie McCarthy and Courtney Neves

Presented PowerPoint and explained the work of the Report Card Committee and where it stands at this time. Questions about what “exceed” means; committee will go back and discuss more.

Kathryn Crowley requested that the vote be tabled for tonight; she wanted to show where we are with this document, get feedback from teachers, and then provide professional development; staff will be given a month to contact Dr. Bowler about concerns and then the Report Card Committee will then put it all together for the final draft.

End result:

- Report Card Committee will be meeting again**
- Will have drafts ready of Kindergarten and Grades 1-5 standards based report cards with new grading key;**
- Drafts will go out to teachers to review;**
- Professional Development will be provided if needed;**
- Parents will be given an opportunity to discuss the report card**
- Report card will be ready for use at the November 4th marking period**
- School Committee will vote to accept the Report Card at the October 11, 2016 meeting**

Personnel Appointments:

Vote to Approve Appointment of Head Teacher at Silver Spring

School - Effective 2016-2017 School Year Mary Teixeira

Motion to approve by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Vote to Approve Appointment of Para Professional at Whiteknact School – Effective 9/8/16

Michael Martins

Motion to approve by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Vote to Approve Appointment of Cosmetology Technical Assistant at Career/Technical School Effective 9/14/16 - Robi Ann Medeiros

Motion to approve by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Vote to Approve Appointment of Librarian for Pre-School at Martin Middle School, Kent Heights and Hennessey Elementary Schools Effective Date to be Determined - Lyse Fontaine

Motion to approve by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Vote to Approve Appointment of Junior Accountant – Administration-Effective Date to be Determined

Motion to table by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Resignations (4) Laura Laviano, Safety Patrol Coordinator at Francis School effective 2016-2017 school year; Robert Karnes, Girls'

Basketball Coach-Riverside Middle School, Effective 2016-2017 School Year; Michael Kirkutis, Head Teacher at Silver Spring; Effective 2016-2017 School Year; Elizabeth Najas, Para-Professional at Whiteknact-Effective 9/6/2016

Motion to approve by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Rescinded Appointment (1) Maria Schulze - .5 Speech Pathologist – Riverside Middle School/High School – Effective 8/30/2016

Motion to approve by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Leave of Absence –Kerrie Calabro-Pepin Guidance Department Head-Riverside Middle School- One Year – Effective 9/23/16

Motion to approve by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Vote to Approve Suspension of Non-Certified Employee – Announced earlier in meeting.

Action Items

Approval of Resolution for Worker's Compensation to be presented to the East Providence City Council at their September 20, 2016 Meeting; Motion to approve by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. Cahoon.

Mr. Tsonos requested that legal counsel, Mr. Silva, comment on the resolution. Mr. Silva said it was a pleasure for him to see this item on the docket, since it has been a concern to his office; he sent requests to Mr. Chapman in 2013 about problems with the Workers' Compensation arrangement and receiving requests for compensation in that system and that the city should clarify it; sent documents to Mr. Chapman to bring before the City Council before and this would be a follow up to August 2013; trail of emails to the city 6/2014; it was agreed to try to settle two cases in court; then change in City Manager and turmoil with Budget Commission; School Committee should move this along; resolution on point and the City Council needs to address it; he is happy to approve; they had to litigate cases in court and if passed by the city, we will not be sued; Workers Comp insurance will cover those claims.

Kathryn Crowley – Mr. Chapman asked her to make the presentation of the resolution to the City Council. Motion to approve by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. Cahoon. Vote 5-0.

Approval of Five-Year Technology Financial Plan

Motion to approve by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine. Vote 5-0.

Vote to Approve Elementary Report Cards

Motion by Mr. Cahoon, to table, seconded by Mr. Monteiro (per the

recommendation of the Superintendent). Vote 5-0.

First Passage of Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming and Transitioning Students Policy – Kathryn Crowley – presented to the Superintendent’s Association being passed in RI; please email any questions to her; will be on the agenda in October for final reading. Mr. Cahoon requested that the Bulling Policy aligns with this.

Motion to approve first passage by Mr. Cahoon, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.

Public Comment II – Non Agenda Items

Ms. Beauchaine – Hennessey Program – thanks to all who assisted; School Committee and City Council donated to this fourth playground build; community comes together; we hope to accomplish another in the future. Thanks to Izilda Teves for her leadership.

Mr. Ferreira – people just appear and help in fundraising efforts; all for kids; thanks to city and school personnel; his hope is that every school will have a playground.

Announcements

Motion by Mr. Monteiro to adjourn at 10:51PM, seconded by Mr. Cahoon. Vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Nathan Cahoon, Clerk of the Committee